THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) The government gives adequate importance to greater inflow of investment (public and private) in 'core' sectors of the economy. Recognising the huge demand for infrastructure services and inadequacy of domestic resources, foreign investment has been permitted in core sectors such as power, petroleum, mining, roads and highways, telecommunications. The Government is also conscious of protecting interests of the domestic industry. Special additional duty of 4 per cent imposed in 1998-99 Budget on imports of large number of items is with the aim to provide a level playing field to domestic industry. Recent measures like buyback of shares, permission to make inter-corporate investment without prior approval of Central Government, establishment of Investor Education & Protection Fund, awarding nomination facility to holders of shares/debentures and fixed deposits and statutory enforcement of accounting standards are expected to provide a strong fillip to corporate growth in the near future.

Language for Answering Papers in Exams Conducted by BSRBs

1757. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that various Banking Service Recruitment Boards, have made it compulsory to answer one paper in local language in the clerical grade examination;

(b) if so, whether Government are aware that this decision of the BSRB will deprive the candidates who had studied in different States upto matriculation consequent on their changing residence from one State to another due to their parents being in transferable Central Services; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) to (c) Reports were received by the Government that certain Banking Service Recruitment Boards (BSRBs) have made it compulsory to answer one paper in local language in the Clerks' Grade Examination. The matter was examined and the concerned BSRBs were advised to withdraw the stipulation and issue corrigendum where the advertisements were issued requiring answering of one paper in local language. As per available information, such a corrigendum has already been issued by the concerned BSRBs.

Proper Service for LIC Policy Holders

1758. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether LIC Eastern Zone have noticed that policyholder of some branches within the town, where its headquarters is located, are not being served properly;

(b) whether the Zonal Manager Eastern Zone have received number of complaints relating to overcharging of premium and interest, non-issue of policy bonds etc.;

(c) if so, the details of complaints received during the last three months and action taken thereon; and

(d) the steps to be taken for providing proper services to policy holders in general?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) have informed that it has come to their notice that policy-holders of some the branches in Calcutta were having a few policy servicing problems during the transitional period following updation of

technology in the wake of installation of online computers. LIC have taken steps to overcome the teething trouble quickly.

(b) to (d) A complaint was received regarding non-receipt of premium receipt and remittance of premium after revival. Since the copy sent by post by the LIC was not received by the policy holder, the office sent certified copies of the premium receipts to the policyholder. The second complaint regarding double payment of premia has since been rectified by refunding the excess payment to the party. Apart from these two complaints, a few complaints were received regarding non-issue of policy bonds. This is on account of the incorrect address given in the proposal form by the party or due to postal non-delivery. These have since been rectified by the LIC.

The following measures have been taken to improve the performance of the LIC in the matter.

(a) installation of computers in all branches located at Zonal Headquarters of Eastern Zone?

(b) to network all branch offices in Calcutta Metro Division; and

(c) training of staff members has been strengthened.

These measures, it is hoped by the LIC, would improve customer service.

Cases Pending before CEGAT

1759. SHRI RAGHAVJI: PROF. VIJAY MALHOTRA: KUMAR

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of cases pending before Customs, Excise and Gold (Control) Appellate Tribunal for settlement as on 30th September, 1998 together with period of pendency;

(b) what are the reasons for their pendency; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken for their speedy settlement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE (SHRI KADAMBUR MR. JANARTHANAN): (a) sir the total number of pending cases is 33,450 as on 30.9.98. the period pendency is given in the statement. (See below).

(b) The reasons are as follows:—

(i) The number of posts of Members sanctioned for the Tribunal is not commensurate with the number of appeals.

(ii) Appeals involving Public Sector undertakings and Central Govt. Departments remain pending until clearance of the Committee on Disputes is obtained.

(iii) Appeals relating to raising of the demand for Central Excise Duty for past period have to be kept pending as the matter has been referred to the Constitutional Bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

(c) The steps are as follows:—

(i) Regional Benches have been empowered to hear and decide certain categories of cases;

(ii) Single Member Benches have been authorised to decided cases involving amount upto Rs. 10 lakhs.

(iii) Circuit Benches have been started;

(iv) A pilot project for computerisation has been approved.